AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached "Replacement Sheets" of drawings includes changes to Figure 1 and 2. The attached "Replacement Sheets," which include Figures 1 and 2, replaces the original sheets including Figures 1 and 2.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets 1/3 and 2/3

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are now pending in the application. Of these pending claims, Claims 5, 7, 10 and 11 have been cancelled. The amendments to the claims contained herein are of equivalent scope as originally filed and, thus, are not a narrowing amendment. The Examiner's attention is directed to Figures 1 and 2 which incorporate the changes to the element numbers as recommended by the Examiner. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 AND 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 8-10, 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nunes, Jr. (U.S. Pat. No. 3,429,377). Claims 1-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of Casimaty et al (U.S. Pat. No. 5,655,729) and Nunes, Jr. (U.S. Pat. No. 3,429,377). Claims 11, 12, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nunes, Jr. (U.S. Pat. No. 3,429,377). In view of the amendments and arguments herein, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner's attention is directed to amended independent Claim 1 which includes that the system provides a controller with a sensor to detect the ending edge of the sod strip and a sensor configured to determine the location of the transport conveyer. The claim further has been amended to contain the limitation that the controller is configured to deactivate the operation of the holding conveyor after a predetermined amount of movement of the transport conveyor and after the activation of the second sensor.

Applicants note than neither reference discloses a sod rolling system having a controller configured to read inputs from a pair of sensors to discharge the sod roll being completely rolled and in a proper orientation. In this regard, the first sensor determines the location of the ending edge of the roll, while the second sensor determines the location of the drive conveyor. By keying the system to both the ending edge of the sod strip and the movement of the drive conveyor, the system overcomes inherent problems which may occur due to variations in the drive speed of the conveyor.

This is opposed to the prior art systems cited which suffer the same problems described in the background of the invention of the instant application. For example, the flap position may still change due to variations in sod thickness, length of the strip, and amount of slip between the sod and the two conveyors. The Examiner's attention is directed to column 8, line 68, through column 9 of line 5 of the Nunes reference. The Nunes reference recognizes the problem of the rotational orientation of the sod roll, but relies on gravity and the kinematic interaction of the sod roll and the ground to properly orient the sod roll. This admission in the Nunes reference makes it clear that the mechanism in Nunes is not capable of reliably orienting the flap of the sod roll properly.

Amended independent Claim 8 includes the limitation that the system has a holding conveyor located in proximity to an end of the transport conveyor. Activation of the holding conveyor retains the sod roll on the transport conveyor and deactivation of the holding conveyor enables the sod roll to move off of the transport conveyor. A controller is provided which is configured to control the transport and holding conveyors, said controller further configured to receive an input signal from the trailing edge sensor and enabling a user definable time delay before deactivating the holding conveyor. The cited prior art systems do not disclose a controller configured to control a transport

conveyor and the holding conveyor in a manner which allows the proper orientation or the sod roll flap as disclosed.

Independent method Claim 13 includes the step of determining a user adjustable time delay which is a function of the displacement of the transport conveyor and the location of the trailing edge portion of the strip. Applicants note that neither reference teaches this limitation. Further, as previously mentioned, neither reference mentions rotationally adjusting the sod roll to place the sod flap in a specific orientation as claimed.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: March 30, 2005

By: _____
Joseph M. Lafata, Reg. No. 37,166
Christopher A. Eusebi, Reg. No. 44,672

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600